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The Institute for Creation Research, a young-earth creationist organization, has cleared the first hurdle in its quest for authorization to issue master's degrees in science education in Texas. "The nonprofit Institute for Creation Research in Dallas wants to train future science teachers in Texas and elsewhere using an online curriculum. A state advisory group gave its approval Friday; now the final say rests with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, which will consider the request next month," [reported](#) [4] the *Dallas Morning News* (December 15, 2007). According to a December 17, 2007, [report](#) [5] by Steven Schafersman of Texas Citizens for Science, THECB will meet on January 24, 2008, to consider the ICR's application. If approved, the ICR will have two years to obtain accreditation for its graduate school from an independent accreditation agency.

ICR recently moved its headquarters from the San Diego, California, area to Dallas. In the October issue of ICR's publication *Acts & Facts*, its president John Morris explained, "The possibility of moving to Dallas surfaced when my brother, Dr. Henry Morris III, discerned that a central location would be beneficial for ICR, with several possibilities for student services at nearby affiliated colleges. The many good churches and large numbers of ICR supporters living in North Texas made it a natural fit for the ministry. When my father [Henry Morris] was still alive he approved the move to Dallas, especially as a way to strengthen the graduate school. In 2006, ICR opened a distance education effort in Dallas, as well as the hub of ICR's internet ministries. ... As additional operational functions were assigned to the new Dallas office, the Board concluded that it was in ICR's best interests to move the entire ministry."

The ICR's graduate school was previously accredited by the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS), a group founded by Henry Morris; Henry Morris III presently serves on its commission. Texas does not recognize accreditation by TRACS, forcing the ICR to seek temporary state certification while it applies for accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

(SACS). As a first step toward certification, a committee of Texas educators visited the ICR's facilities in Dallas to evaluate whether the ICR meets the legal requirements for state certification. The [report](#) [6] (PDF) **[Link broken]** described the educational program as "plausible," adding, "The proposed degree would be generally comparable to an initial master's degree in science education from one of the smaller, regional universities in the state."

NCSE's Eugenie C. Scott disagreed, telling the *Dallas Morning News*, "It sounds like the committee may have just taken at face value what the ICR claims ... There's a huge gulf between what the ICR is doing and what they're doing at legitimate institutions like ... [the University of Texas] or Baylor." (The committee members were a librarian, an educational administrator, and a mathematician; none was professionally trained in biology, geology, or physics.) Inside Higher Ed [reported](#) [7] (December 17, 2007), "Some science groups are aghast by the idea that Texas would authorize master's degrees in science education that are based on complete opposition to evolution and literal acceptance of the Bible. And these groups are particularly concerned because the students in these programs would be people who are or want to be school teachers."

Although Patricia Nason, chair of the ICR's science education department, told the *Dallas Morning News*, "Our students are given both sides. They need to know both sides, and they can draw their own conclusion," the ICR's statement of faith includes the tenet, "All things in the universe were created and made by God in the six literal days of the creation week described in Genesis 1:1-2:3, and confirmed in Exodus 20:8-11. The creation record is factual, historical and perspicuous; thus all theories of origins or development which involve evolution in any form are false." Similarly, applicants to the ICR's graduate school are explicitly told that their answers to the essay questions on the application help to determine "your dedication to the Lord, the Word, and teaching creation science." According to the *Dallas Morning News's* article, the ICR's graduate program "offers typical education classes, teaching such fundamentals as how to use lab equipment, the Internet and PowerPoint in the classroom. But it also offers a class called 'Advanced studies in creationism.' And the course Web page for 'Curriculum design in science' gives this scenario: 'The school board has asked you to serve on a committee that is examining grades 6-12 science goals. ... Both evolutionist and creationist teachers serve on the curriculum committee. How will you convince them to include creation science as well as evolution in the new scope and sequence?'" The ICR's graduate school's website repeatedly declares, "ICR maintains that scientific creationism should be taught along with the scientific aspects of evolutionism in tax-supported institutions."

The Texas Commissioner of Higher Education, Raymund Paredes, is to study the ICR's application and offer his opinion to THECB. He [told](#) [8] the *San Antonio Express-News* (December 19, 2007), "Because this controversy is so potentially hot, we owe it to both sides to be absolutely fair in evaluating it. ... Maybe the real issue here is to put this proposal in the right category. Maybe it's not a program in science education. Maybe it's a program in creation studies. Then we have to decide whether that is a legitimate field or not." *The New York Times* (December 19, 2007) [reported](#) [9], "Asked how the institute could educate students to teach science, Dr. Paredes, who holds a doctorate in American civilization from the University of Texas and served 10 years as vice chancellor for academic development at the University of California, said, 'I don't know. I'm not a scientist.'"

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